

Message Text

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TAGS: EGEN, ETRN

SUBJ: GRAIN PORTS AND SHIPMENTS (CER 5-59504)

REF: STATE 015518

1. DURING MONTHS OF NOVEMBER, DECEMBER AND JANUARY, FIVE U.S. TANKERS, CARRYING TOTAL OF OVER 150,000 TONS OF GRAIN, REGISTERED AT CONGEN. WE ALSO AWARE THAT UNKNOWN NUMBER OF SOVIET VESSELS HAVE ARRIVED DURING SAME PERIOD CARRYING U.S. GRAIN. MASTERS OF FIRST TWO U.S. VESSELS WHICH ARRIVED IN NOVEMBER COMPLAINED OF LENGTHY WAITS, ONE FOR 24 DAYS, OUTSIDE PORT BEFORE BERTHING SPACE AVAILABLE. PORT CONGESTION PROBLEMS SEEMED TO BE RESOLVED QUICKLY THEREAFTER AND RECENT VESSELS HAVE HAD LITTLE OR NO WAITING TIME. PER OUR OWN OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS OF SHIPS' PERSONNEL, GRAIN UNLOADED PRIMARILY BY VACUATORS, ALTHOUGH BUCKET CRANES ALSO USED. IN EVERY CASE WE AWARE OF, GRAIN LOADED DIRECTLY INTO BARGES AND RAILCARS, OFTEN SIMULTANEOUSLY. IT OUR IMPRESSION THAT LOADED RAILCARS REMAIN IN PORT AREA MINIMAL POSSIBLE TIME AND USUALLY MOVED OUT IMMEDIATELY. SOVIET UNLOADING CREWS HAVE USUALLY WORKED ON ROUND-THE-CLOCK BASIS, AND WE ESTIMATE AVERAGE UNLOADING CAPACITY TO BE ROUGHLY 3,000 TONES PER DAY PER SHIP. TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, NONE OF RECENT U.S. SHIPS REQUIRED FUMIGATION, IN CONTRAST TO FREQUENT FUMIGATION

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REQUIRED FOR U.S. GRAIN SHIPMENTS ARRIVING HERE IN

1974. MASTER OF VIRTUALLY EVERY SHIP HAS SPECIFICALLY COMMENTED THAT OCCASIONAL RAIL CAR SHORTAGE HAS TEMPORARILY HALTED UNLOADING, ALTHOUGH PORT OFFICIALS ALWAYS HAVE CITED OTHER REASONS, E.G., BAD WEATHER, EXCESSIVE GRAIN DUST, OTHER PRIORITIES, ETC. HOWEVER, AS SOON AS RAILCARS APPEAR, UNLOADING HAS BEGUN AGAIN IMMEDIATELY, REGARDLESS OF WEATHER, TIME OF DAY OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS.

2. REGARDING FUMIGATION PRACTICES, MR. BRUCE FULENWIDER, REPRESENTATIVE OF RESEARCH PRODUCTS COMPANY, SALINA, KANSAS, UNDOUBTEDLY CAN PROVIDE USEFUL SUBSTANTIVE INFORMATION. FULENWIDER TRAVELED ON SOVIET GRAIN SHIP "ZVENIGOROD" FROM HOUSTON TO LENINGRAD DURING DECEMBER AND JANUARY IN JOINT TEST OF FUMIGATION TECHNIQUES. HE HAS BEEN IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ON THIS PROJECT.

3. DURING NOVEMBER 1975 VISIT OF SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE STAFF MEMBER RICHARD GILMORE, MANAGER AND DEPUTY MANAGER OF LENINGRAD COMMERCIAL PORT TOLD GILMORE THEY HAD RECENTLY BEEN ORDERED TO GIVE HIGHEST PRIORITY TO U.S. GRAIN SHIPMENTS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. EVIDENCE AND COMPLAINTS OF CONGESTION AND DELAYS IN BERTHING AND UNLOADING GRAIN SHIPS CEASED SHORTLY AFTER THIS CONVERSATION. PORT OFFICIALS ALSO PROVIDED GILMORE WITH ADDITIONAL DETAILS AND BACKGROUND ON LENINGRAD PORT'S GRAIN OPERATIONS IN GENERAL, WHICH GILMORE NOTED AND PLANNED TO INCLUDE IN HIS TRIP REPORT.

4. CONGEN WILL ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON REFTTEL TOPICS THROUGH DISCUSSIONS WITH PERSONNEL ON FUTURE U.S. GRAIN VESSELS ARRIVING HERE. CONGEN OFFICERS PLAN TRIP TO RIGA AND KLAIPEDA DURING FEBRUARY AND WILL PROVIDE WHATEVER INFORMATION AVAILABLE.
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